



The North Sea
Region Programme
2007–2013



Place-keeping through Partnership:

How can we sustain quality green & open spaces in a time of economic constraint?

Wednesday 11th July 2012

Green

Workshop Notes

Workshop 1: Priorities for Place-keeping: City, Area and Site and Collective, Organisational and Individual

What are the key issues that need to be addressed and the priorities for the city as a whole?

Theme: Preserving Green Open Spaces

- Importance to value and protect from pressure for housing development
- Maintain allocation of green open spaces for play/leisure within easy reach of communities

Theme: Community Group Capacity

- Mainly retired and reduced motivation if work is physical and not focused on a local project.
- Potential to encourage younger people but often lack required skills and knowledge
- Community groups could be 'up-skilled' but should volunteers take on responsibility for major maintenance work?
- Deprived areas are subject to inequalities related to city green open space provision. Friends of Groups may not see place-keeping as a priority and volunteer commitment is often lower in these areas.
- Need to identify site priorities, existing and missing groups and skills and work to address these (e.g. East GOSS, Sheffield)

Theme: Funding

- Difficult to obtain long-term revenue funding compared to one-off capital funding
- Absence of 'after' funding for projects. Lottery Funders need to alter their terms and conditions so that funding supports long-term maintenance
- Community groups generally have increased opportunities to access funding compared to local authorities.
- Focus funding on city-wide projects rather than funding external sites

Theme: Unique site needs

- Wide variety and range of sites city-wide.
- Not possible to be supported by a 'one size fits all' approach
- Area-based approach offers an effective tool to address the range of needs, and expectations.

What are the key issues and priorities for the different organisations?

Theme: Trusting Relationships

- There is a distrust of council workers and the council is perceived as a barrier by Friends of Groups
- Community groups can have a 'our space, our way' approach and are reluctant to take on advice/knowledge from professionals even if beneficial
- Needs to be a change of approach from decision makers and community groups to enable trusting relationships to develop between groups and professionals

Theme: Delivery Approach

- Sheffield has committed and innovative groups working in partnership.
- Need to be realistic about what can deliver as well as innovative.
- Need to think, look and plan long-term

Theme: Communication

- Need to develop connections and share knowledge at all levels
- Use effective methods to enable residents to understand the need for change of approach and change their

perceptions, values and beliefs relating to green open spaces

What opportunities does the current situation give?

Theme: Management and Maintenance

- Trial various approaches and select realistic (cost-effective) alternatives. Need to act not just talk about these.
- Find out what communities want and present them with the best realistic option(s) to increase community ownership
- Utilise available resources and expertise and source local skills and materials
- Transfer maintenance responsibilities to community organisations (e.g. Trusts and other social enterprises). Evidence this has been successful with other parks but must ensure are committed to best interests of the community.

Theme: Knowledge Transfer

- Sharing information with partners/stakeholders. Organisations have the information but this is not accessible to all.
- Develop effective methods of communication to highlight both successes and failures. Good practice is followed and mistakes are not repeated. This could be a website (e.g. Millhouses Park) and potential for the University to facilitate this.
- Develop links with organisations not traditionally involved in green open spaces. The NHS would be a good partner due to links between health and open spaces and to lobby against further cuts
- Promotion of the Sheffield Green Open Space Strategy and development of a city-wide forum

Theme: Assets

- Sheffield has a number of great opportunities and connections compared to other cities
- Need to remember this is 'everybody's Sheffield' not just the Friends of Groups' or Sheffield Council's.

Workshop 2: Delivering the GOSS and building place-keeping capacity and collective responsibility

How to deliver the GOSS through place-keeping?

Theme: GOSS format

- The Green Open Space Strategy (GOSS) needs to be developed into an accessible, user-friendly document providing the vision and aims to a range of audiences
- Partners and stakeholders need to recognise that the GOSS is much more than a document and is a priority in order to address current issues

Theme: Roles and Responsibilities

- These need defining and formalising amongst partners and stakeholders
- Is everyone committed to delivery of the GOSS through place-keeping?
- Need to look city-wide and nationally to include a other organisations and ensure all roles are assigned

Theme: Delivery

- Continue to use Sheffield Standards as a benchmark and outcome measure
- Get the pilots 'off the ground' as soon as possible
- Ensure all organisations involved have access to the GOSS in a suitable format. This is not currently the case.

Can we identify critical roles, responsibilities, approaches and actions to do this?

Theme: Approaches

- Apply initiatives such as Place-Keeping Champions for each site to raise its profile
- Apply a 'correct solution for the correct space' approach. Ensure plans are understood and meet local needs and there is a 'best fit' of skills to sites.
- Holistic approach to assessing needs and delivering solutions.
- Partnership working to 'pool resources'
- Ensuring accessibility at all levels (eg. Translating the GOSS so that it meets other organisations agendas and language)

Theme: Partnership Development

- Talk to other organisations outside of 'green space boundaries' such as the NHS Trusts and Life Long Education Services
- Improve local community involvement by increasing their interest in nature and an awareness of the GOSS. Aim to encourage people to sign up their interest.
- Include the private sector as a means of long-term funding source and potential to invest in local jobs

Theme: Roles and Responsibilities

- Need to know the 'who can?, where?, how? and why?' in terms of ensuring effective delivery and keeping organisations and stakeholders informed.

How might this work in practice at different scales - city/strategic, organisational, site based and personal etc.?

Theme: Collaboration

- Would have to work together based on the particular skills/strengths of each organisation (e.g. Council as a facilitator). Partners could identify what they are prepared to do and resources can then be pooled.
- Networks can be developed through the council but groups can also develop community networks independent of the council.

Theme: Lesson Learnt

- Make use of the pilots projects to guide future delivery based on good practice and current evidence base and avoid repeating mistakes.

Theme: Site Management

- Develop plans for each site based on Sheffield Standards
- Keep plans clear, simple and effective.